



**MONTANA COUNTY ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION**  
34 West Sixth Avenue • Suite 2E  
Helena, Montana 59601

EXHIBIT 19  
DATE 1-10-07  
HB 2

December 8, 2006

Honorable Brian Schweitzer  
Governor  
State of Montana  
Capitol Station  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Governor Schweitzer:

This past week at the Montana County Attorneys Association Board of Directors meeting we finalized our legislative agenda. We determined that a top priority for the 2007 Legislative Session would be mental health funding and related issues.

Mental health issues never have been easy for us. However, the last few years they have become increasingly difficult. The sharp decrease in funding for the Mental Health Services Plan under the Martz administration necessitated counties to transport more of our folks to the State Hospital. In addition, successful efforts by Senator Keenan to rewrite portions of the mental health law further hindered us.

The Local Advisory Councils and the Service Area Authorities have been meeting and planning. We wholeheartedly agree with the SAAs and endorse the following priorities:

- Increased funding for secure crisis beds in our communities.
- 72-hour presumptive eligibility for individuals in crisis.
- Increased funding for the Mental Health Services Plan.

We laud you for making mental health a priority in your budget. However, we would be interested in a dialogue around shifting the emphasis from institutional to community care.

Sincerely,

MIKE WEBER  
President